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# NATURAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

OFFICE OF GOVERNMENTAL  
AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS



U.S. DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE  
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## SUMMARY

### Natural Disaster Assistance Available From the U.S. Department of Agriculture

#### Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

Assistance in Obtaining Freight Rate Reductions for Feed and Livestock.

#### Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS)

Livestock Feed Programs	Emergency Conservation Measures
Emergency Harvesting	Debris Clearance
Adjustments in Regular Programs	Migratory Wildfowl Feeding
Indian Acute Distress Feed Donation	Resident Wildlife Feeding

#### Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)

Work on Plant and Animal Diseases.

#### Science and Education Administration--Extension (SEA-Extension)

Information on How to Alleviate Disaster Damage.  
Advice on Cleanup, Sanitation, Insect Control, Food Preparation,  
Recovery and Renovation.

#### Farmers Home Administration (FmHA)

Emergency Loans

#### Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

Emergency Food Coupon Allotments  
Direct Food Assistance

#### Forest Service (FS)

Fire Protection  
Rescue Work

#### Rural Electrification Administration (REA)

Loans and Technical Assistance

#### Soil Conservation Service (SCS)

Technical and Financial Assistance under Section 216,  
Flood Control Act, 1950.



NATURAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FROM  
THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TYPES OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) renders many types of assistance in emergencies caused by natural disaster. The nature and scope of the disaster determine which types of assistance are available and which will be authorized. The USDA disaster programs are coordinated by the Deputy Director for Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of Governmental and Public Affairs and the chairmen of USDA State and county emergency boards. Depending on the nature and severity of a disaster, USDA is prepared to do the following.

- Provide emergency food coupon assistance in disaster areas whenever local authorities identify increasing needs and the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of USDA authorizes such assistance.
- Cost-share with farmers in providing livestock feed.
- Make disaster payments to farmers when, due to a natural disaster, planting is prevented or when the yield for a crop is abnormally low.
- Provide loans and cost-share financing to assist farmers and other rural residents in rehabilitation efforts and to assist rural electric and telephone cooperatives to repair or replace damaged lines.
- Make indemnity payments to farmers for crops covered by insurance through the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC).
- Provide technical information and assistance to farmers and others in developing disaster plans and in returning to normal after a disaster has occurred.
- Control plant and livestock diseases and insect infestations.
- Put out fires on or adjacent to national forests and provide aid in putting out other rural fires.
- Provide assistance through regular USDA programs adapted as necessary to disaster situations.

WHERE TO APPLY FOR ASSISTANCE

USDA has offices to serve every county. In many counties, all USDA agencies are at a central location. Except for the following types of assistance, any local USDA agency office can either take the application for approved help or direct the person to the nearest office of the USDA agency providing the service:



- For certification of eligibility for food coupons, disaster victims who are able to prepare foods and serve them as a family unit should apply at the local city or county welfare office or to an authorized disaster assistance center.
- For fire fighting aid on private lands, contact the nearest Federal or State Forestry Office or local fire department. If they cannot handle the fire, they will request help.
- For assistance for Indian tribes, contact the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior.
- For assistance in obtaining railroad freight rate reductions, contact the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) in Washington.
- For assistance to electric and telephone borrowers, contact the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in Washington.

ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE WITH OR WITHOUT A DECLARATION OF A MAJOR DISASTER BY THE PRESIDENT

Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) can assist in obtaining railroad freight rate reductions to facilitate the movement of:

- Feed supplies to areas affected by natural disasters, or
- Livestock from such areas to other areas where adequate pasture or forage exists.

Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) can provide assistance through the following programs:

- Emergency Livestock Feed Program. ASCS cost-shares with farmers on the purchase of feed for eligible livestock. ASC county committees are authorized to initiate the program when they determine that disaster conditions exist.
- Emergency Conservation Measures Program. County ASC committees are authorized to make cost-share payments (up to 80 percent) to farmers and ranchers to solve new conservation problems created on farmland by a natural disaster.
- Adjustments in Regular Programs. Some regular programs include specific procedures for natural disaster aid, such as payments to wheat, feed grain, upland cotton, and rice growers when planting is prevented or yields are abnormally low.
- Emergency harvesting. Emergency harvesting may be authorized on set-aside or diverted acreage following a loss of feed supply due to a natural disaster.



- Indian Acute Distress Donation Program. Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) feed grains may be donated to Indian tribes for livestock feeding following a request by the Department of the Interior and approval by the Secretary of Agriculture. Such assistance is based on chronic acute distress of needy members of an Indian tribe--distress intensified due to severe drought, flood, or other catastrophe. Distribution of feed to a tribe is arranged by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior.
- Migratory Wildfowl Feeding. CCC grain may be donated to the Department of the Interior for feeding migratory wildfowl when they are threatened with starvation or when they threaten to damage a crop. This action depends on a finding by the Secretary of the Interior that an emergency exists.
- Resident Wildlife Feeding. CCC grain may be donated to State agencies for resident wildlife threatened with serious damage or loss from starvation. This action depends on a joint finding by the Secretary of the Interior and the State Wildlife Agency that an emergency exists.

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is prepared to provide technical advice and assistance as follows:

- Animal Diseases. Veterinarians and livestock inspectors may assist in emergency measures to prevent, control, and eradicate certain domestic livestock and poultry diseases.
- Plant Pests. Plant pathologists and entomologists may assist in emergency measures to control, eradicate, and prevent the spread of certain plant diseases and insect pests.

State Cooperative Extension Services (CES) supports all USDA natural disaster missions through the Land-Grant universities in cooperation with SEA (Extension) by providing:

- Informational and educational material to farmers, ranchers, and others on what they can do to protect themselves and their property against the hazards associated with disasters.
- Advice on cleanup of damaged property, sanitation precautions, insect control, food preparation in an emergency, recovery actions on damaged farms, and renovation of damaged equipment and property.

Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) may make emergency loans following a natural disaster.

#### Program Authorization

The FmHA State Director may implement the Emergency Loan Program when a natural disaster substantially affects one or more farmers, ranchers, or aquaculture operators.

Who May Receive Loans. Eligible farmers, ranchers, and aquaculture operators.

#### Loan Purposes

Actual Losses. Such loans are at 5 percent, and funds may be used:

- (1) To repair, restore, or replace damaged or destroyed farm property and supplies.
- (2) For expenses incurred for crop production.
- (3) To pay farm debts owed to another creditor.

Major Adjustments. A borrower eligible for an emergency loan for actual losses also may be eligible for a loan at the prevailing market interest rates to:

- (1) Construct or improve buildings (including a home) and facilities.
- (2) Purchase livestock, poultry, or other animals, and pay costs incident to reorganizing the farming system to make it a sound operation, equivalent to the operation prior to the disaster.
- (3) Buy essential home equipment and furnishings, and to refinance debts under certain conditions.

Annual Operating Expenses may be borrowed for prevailing market interest rates for up to 6 full crop years after the disaster designation date to permit indebted emergency loan borrowers time to return to usual credit sources.

#### Loan Features

Eligibility. All applications will be considered without regard to race, color, creed, sex, marital status, or national origin from anyone who:



- (1) Has suffered property damage or severe crop losses from a natural disaster.
- (2) Is unable to obtain the necessary credit from other sources.
- (3) Is a U.S. citizen.
- (4) Is an established farm, ranch, or aquaculture operator, either tenant or owner-operator, who manages the enterprise.
- (5) Is of good character, and with the industry, ability, and experience to carry out the proposed farming operations.

#### Amount of Loans

- (1) Actual Loss. Limited to the amount of actual loss not compensated for by insurance or otherwise.
- (2) Major Adjustment. Sufficient to make the necessary adjustments to the operation.
- (3) Annual Operating Expenses. Limited to the amounts necessary to provide operating expenses needed for a crop year.

#### Interest Rates

- (1) For emergency loans, rates for actual losses will be 5 percent.
- (2) For other farm real estate purposes and for operating purposes interest rates will be those prevailing in the private market for comparable long-term and intermediate credit, based on a determination by the Secretary of Agriculture. These rates will be established on July 1 and January 1 of each year.

#### Repayment Terms

- (1) Repayment must be made as rapidly as is feasible in annual installments consistent with the applicant's ability to pay. Repayment varies according to the purposes of the loan. Loans for:
  - Actual losses to crops, livestock, supplies, and equipment may be scheduled for repayment within 7 years. These loans may be renewed for as many as 5 years. Under some conditions, a longer repayment period may be authorized, but it may not exceed 20 years. Generally, real estate will be needed as security when more than 7 years is authorized.

-- Real estate loans will be scheduled for repayment within 40 years or less.

-- Annual operating expenses will be scheduled for repayment each year when the principal income is received from the year's operations.

- (2) All emergency loans will be reviewed 2 years after they are made, and every other year thereafter to determine whether borrowers are able to return to regular sources of credit. Borrowers are required to refinance if it is determined that other credit is available to them, even though their emergency loans have not fully matured.

Security. Liens on crops, livestock, farm machinery, or farm real estate to cover the amount of the loan. If the usual security cannot be provided because of the disaster, loans may be made on the collateral that is available, even if part of it has depreciated in value because of the disaster, and on the basis of the applicant's repayment ability.

#### Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC)

In more than one-third of the counties, FCIC offers to sell insurance to farmers on one or more crops. This insurance covers production costs, and payment is made after inspection and confirmation of the insured crop loss where yields fall below guaranteed coverage. Farmers must have purchased such insurance prior to crop loss.

#### Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

- P.L. 93-288 and Executive Order 11795 assign responsibility to the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration of the Department of Housing and Urban Development for assuring that adequate stocks of food are ready and available for emergency mass feeding or distribution in disaster areas.
- USDA food distribution regulations (7 CFR 250) provide that foods donated for school feeding and other FNS programs may be used by relief organizations for mass feeding in emergency or disaster situations. USDA-donated foods may also be used for emergency distribution to households in food stamp areas affected by disasters when the Secretary of Agriculture determines that commercial channels of food distribution have been disrupted.
- In disaster areas the Secretary of Agriculture also is authorized to establish temporary emergency standards of eligibility for food stamp assistance to victims for the duration of the emergency if:
  - (1) Requested by the State agency responsible for the administration of federally aided public assistance programs, and



- (2) As the result of a disaster, income or resources are reduced or inaccessible, and households need food assistance which cannot be met by the regular Food Stamp Program procedures.

#### Forest Service (FS)

- Provides fire protection in national forests, and assists in control of fires that threaten to spread from nearby lands into national forests.
- Cooperates with State foresters through provisions of Section 2 of the Clark-McNary Act of 1924, and Title IV of the Rural Development Act of 1972 by providing financial and technical assistance in rural and wildland fire prevention and suppression.
- Provides professional assistance and financing to State organizations for preventing, detecting, and evaluating forest insect and disease outbreaks on lands of all ownership.
- Installs emergency measures for runoff retardation and soil erosion prevention to safeguard life and property of watershed lands suddenly damaged by fire, flood, and other natural disasters.
- Furnishes personnel and equipment for rescue work and other emergency measures on national forests and on other lands in cooperation with State forestry agencies.

#### Rural Electrification Administration (REA)

REA assists REA-financed electric and telephone cooperatives and companies with additional loans and technical assistance in obtaining resources for restoration of service after a natural disaster.

#### Soil Conservation Service (SCS)

SCS provides technical and financial assistance under authority of Section 216 of the Flood Control Act of 1950, with authorization from the Secretary of Agriculture, to retard runoff and prevent soil erosion. This is to safeguard lives and property from floods, resulting from erosion on any watershed suddenly damaged by fire or any other natural forces.

SCS provides technical assistance for:

- (1) Rehabilitation of land and conservation systems for which ASCS provides cost-sharing.
- (2) Emergency protection against high water and rehabilitation of rural lands damaged by natural disaster.

- Provides assistance:

- (1) In evaluating the severity of the disaster (depth of water, time overflow, area affected, etc.).
- (2) In assessing the types of problems created and the amount and types of emergency work needed to restore the area to normal operations.
- (3) In locating heavy earth-moving equipment.
- (4) In solving transportation problems when roads and highways cannot be used.

- Provides information and materials (maps and reports) on watershed projects, river basin studies, and Resource Conservation and Development projects.
- Makes available agency equipment for emergency use.

#### ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOLLOWING A MAJOR DISASTER OR EMERGENCY DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDENT

Applicability. A Presidential major disaster or emergency declaration under the Disaster Relief Act of 1974 (P.L. 93-288) makes possible the following additional assistance.

##### Livestock Feed

Assistance may be offered through the donation of CCC-owned feed grain under the:

- (1) Crash Feed Grain Donation Program. Eligible livestock are those which are commingled, stranded, and unidentified as to owner or those owned by one who is temporarily unable to arrange for feed or pasture. The duration of such a program is only until owners are able to resume care of their livestock.
- (2) Herd Preservation Feed Grain Donation Program. Eligible owners must have had their livestock operation so damaged by the disaster that they do not have remaining cash or credit with which to purchase necessary livestock feed at market or livestock feed program prices to maintain their livestock.

The Federal Disaster Assistance Administration (FDAA) may pay the additional cost of feed ingredients and services over and above the donated CCC-owned feed grains.



## Fire Fighting

Section 417 of P.L. 93-288 authorizes the President to provide assistance, including grants, to any State for putting out any fire on publicly or privately owned forest or grassland which threatens such destruction as would constitute a major disaster. USDA Forest Service (or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management) provides technical assistance to FDAA which administers P.L. 93-288.

## Debris Clearance

- (1) P.L. 93-288 authorizes the President to use Federal departments, agencies, and instrumentalities to:
  - Remove from publicly or privately owned lands and waters debris and wreckage resulting from a major disaster, or
  - Make grants to any State or local government for such debris removal.
- (2) Policies, procedures, and methods of removal will be determined by FDAA.

## Emergency Loans

When the President makes a major disaster or emergency declaration, the FmHA automatically makes loans available in counties named by FDAA. Such loans are made at the same interest rates and terms and for the same purposes as described for loans under a designation by the Secretary of Agriculture.







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